

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended) A gas bag protection device, comprising a gas bag which has an outer wall made of a first material, said outer wall having at least one outflow opening, a membrane made of an extensible, second material which is fastened to said outer wall and covers said outflow opening in a not fully inflated state of said gas bag, and a device provided outside said gas bag and serving for destroying said membrane, said gas bag and said device being arranged spaced so far apart from each other such that said membrane meets said device only when a predetermined internal pressure of said gas bag has been reached, wherein said membrane bulges forward toward an exterior ~~like a balloon~~ before reaching said device.

Claim 2 (Canceled)

Claim 3 (Original) The gas bag protection device according to claim 1, wherein said membrane in a folded state of said gas bag is arranged inside said gas bag and turns outwards through said outlet opening on inflation of said gas bag.

Claim 4 (Original) The gas bag protection device according to claim 1, wherein said second material of said membrane is constructed such that in a destroyed state it defines an effective outflow cross-section.

Claim 5 (Original) The gas bag protection device according to claim 4, wherein said membrane in said destroyed state is so extensible that it provides for one of an enlargement and reduction of said effective outflow cross-section as a function of an internal pressure in said gas bag.

Claim 6 (Previously Presented) The gas bag protection device according to claim 1, wherein said device for destroying said membrane is provided on an inner face of a steering wheel.

Claim 7 (Previously Presented) The gas bag protection device according to claim 1, wherein said first material and said membrane define an inflatable volume of said gas bag, said inflatable volume of said gas bag increases when said membrane bulges forward toward the exterior.

Claim 8 (Previously Presented) The gas bag protection device according to claim 1, wherein said membrane is made of an elastic material.

Claim 9 (Currently Amended) A gas bag protection device comprising:

a gas bag which has an outer wall made of a first material, said outer wall having at least one outflow opening;

a membrane made of an extensible, second material which is fastened to said outer wall and covers said outflow opening in a not fully inflated state of said gas bag;

said first material and said membrane defining an inflatable volume of said gas bag; and

a device provided outside said gas bag and serving for destroying said membrane, said gas bag and said device being arranged spaced so far apart from each other that said membrane expands and meets said device only when a predetermined internal pressure of said gas bag has been reached.

Claim 10 (Previously Presented) The gas bag protection device according to claim 9, wherein the inflatable volume defined by the first material and said membrane varies depending upon the load being applied to said gas bag.

Claim 11 (Previously Presented) The gas bag protection device according to claim 10, wherein said membrane in a folded state of said gas bag is arranged inside said gas bag and turns outwards through said outlet opening on inflation of said gas bag.

Claim 12 (Previously Presented) The gas bag protection device according to claim 9, wherein said outflow opening is covered only by said membrane.

Claim 13 (Previously Presented) The gas bag protection device according to claim 1, wherein said outflow opening is covered only by said membrane.

Claim 14 (Currently Amended) A gas bag protection device comprising:

a gas bag which has an outer wall defining an inflatable volume, said outer wall being made of a first material;

said outer wall having at least one outflow opening;

a membrane made of an extensible, ~~gas-impermeable~~ second material which is fastened to said outer wall and covers said outflow opening in a not fully inflated state of said gas bag; and a device provided outside said gas bag and serving for destroying said membrane; said gas bag and said device being arranged spaced apart from each other such that said membrane meets said device only when a predetermined internal pressure of said gas bag has been reached; wherein said membrane is arranged inside said gas bag volume and bulges outwards through said outlet opening ~~like a balloon~~ before reaching said device, wherein said membrane defines a recess that extends inwardly of said gas bag from said outlet opening prior to inflation of said gas bag, said recess of said membrane having a pair of side walls that face each other and extend inwardly from said outlet opening.

Claim 15 (Currently Amended) The gas bag protection device according to claim 14, wherein all of said gas bag remains rearward from said device when said membrane is destroyed by said device.

Claim 16 (Canceled)

Claim 17 (Currently Amended) A gas bag protection device, comprising:

a gas bag which has an outer wall made of a first material, said outer wall having at least one outflow opening;

a membrane made of an extensible, second material which is fastened to said outer wall and covers said outflow opening in a not fully inflated state of said gas bag; and

a device provided outside said gas bag and serving for destroying said membrane, said membrane bulging forward toward an exterior ~~like a balloon~~ before reaching said device to increase the volume of said gas bag and reduce the pressure in said gas bag, said gas bag and said device being spaced apart from each other to cause said membrane to meet said device and be destroyed only when a predetermined internal pressure of said gas bag has been reached.

Claim 18 (New) A gas bag protection device comprising:

a gas bag which has an outer wall being made of a first material; said outer wall having at least one outflow opening;

a membrane made of an extensible second material which is fastened to said outer wall and directly covers said outflow opening in a not fully inflated state of said gas bag; and

a device provided outside said gas bag and serving for destroying said membrane, said gas bag and said device being arranged spaced apart from each

other such that said membrane can directly meet said device, but only when a predetermined internal pressure of said gas bag has been reached, wherein said membrane is arranged inside said gas bag volume and bulges outwards through said outlet opening before directly reaching said device, thereby giving the gas bag a greater volume, wherein said membrane defines a recess that extends inwardly of said gas bag from said outlet opening prior to inflation of said gas bag, said recess of said membrane having side walls that extend inwardly from said outlet opening.

Claim 19 (New) The gas bag protection device according to claim 9 wherein said membrane is made of an elastomeric material.